

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

11 January 1982

Mr. Brian V. Kinney
Chief, Declassification and
Historical Research Branch
Records Management Division
Washington Headquarters Services
Room 1D517, Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20301

Dear Mr. Kinney:

The documents forwarded with your memorandum of 16 December 1981 have been reviewed and the following classification determinations made:


a. Memorandum dated 4 May 1951, Subject: Summary of Intelligence Estimates on Intervention by Chinese Communists in the Korean War (12 October-24 November 1950). It has been determined that this document must remain classified at the SECRET level under Section 1-301(c) of Executive Order 12065 to protect intelligence activities, sources, and methods.

b. Memorandum dated 6 May 1951, Subject: Intelligence and Information Available to FECOM Concerning Chinese Communist Intervention, with two attachments: Tab A, Summarized Excerpts from FECOM Reports; Tab B, Excerpts from CIA Weekly Summaries. It has been determined that the 6 May 1951 memorandum, along with Tab A of this memorandum, contains information of CIA interest that must remain classified at the CONFIDENTIAL level under Executive Order 12065 to protect intelligence activities, sources, and methods. CIA has no objection to the declassification of the Excerpts from CIA Weekly Summaries contained in Tab B of the 6 May 1951 memorandum.

c. Letter dated 21 May 1951 from CIA Director Walter B. Smith to Deputy Secretary of Defense, Robert A. Lovett, must remain classified at the SECRET level under Section 1-301(c) of Executive Order 12065 to protect intelligence activities, sources, and methods.

We have marked the documents with our classification actions and return them to you herewith as requested.

Sincerely,


Chief, Classification Review Division
Office of Information Services
Directorate of Administration

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Enclosures:

- a. Memo dtd 4 May 51
- b. Memo dtd 6 May 51
- c. Ltr dtd 21 May 51

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Unclassified when
Separated from
Enclosures

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Distribution:

Orig - Addressee w/atts

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

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4 May 1951

MEMORANDUM TO: DEPUTY SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

SUBJECT : Summary of Intelligence Estimates on Intervention by
Chinese Communists in the Korean War (12 October -
24 November, 1950).

In compliance with your oral request, herewith is a summary of Estimates made by this agency, under my direction, on the subject of Chinese Communist intervention in Korea. These estimates, except where otherwise noted, had the concurrence of the Intelligence Advisory Committee which is composed of the heads of the intelligence agencies of the government.

1. On 12 October 1950, an estimate on "Critical Situations in the Far East" was prepared at the request of the President for the Wake Island Conference. This estimate stated: "The Chinese Communist ground forces, currently lacking requisite air and naval support, are capable of intervening effectively, but not necessarily decisively, in the Korean conflict.", and: "There are no convincing indications of an actual Chinese Communist intention to resort to full scale intervention in Korea."

After reviewing the factors favoring, and those opposing, Chinese Communist intervention, this estimate concluded that: "While full scale Chinese Communist intervention in Korea must be regarded as a continuing possibility, a consideration of all known factors leads to the conclusion that, barring a Soviet decision for global war, such action is not probable in 1950. During this period, intervention will probably be confined to continued covert assistance to the North Koreans."

2. On 20 October, a personal memorandum was delivered to the President with copies to the Secretaries of State and Defense, which stated: "Since October 13, there have been indications of a possibility that the Chinese Communist government may intend to occupy an area which would secure for their use the Suifu hydroelectric plant and other strategic installations on the Korean side of the Korean-Chinese border. Some of these indications are:"

(1) (This is omitted because of reasons of source security.)

(2) (This paragraph noted the presence of an unusually large number of fighter aircraft in Manchuria.)

(3) (This paragraph contained a report from a usually reliable source indicating that an important military conference had been held within the last few days in Peiping and a decision made to take some military action in North Korea with Chinese Communist troops crossing the border on 14-20 October. On October 19, the same source reported that this movement would precede any official announcement.)

The memorandum concluded with the following paragraph:

"The estimate on possibility of Chinese Communist intervention in North Korea furnished you just prior to your Pacific trip, listed as one consideration the probable desire of the Chinese Government to control the hydroelectric installations on the Korean side of the Yalu River. It is possible that a limited area occupation for this purpose might be undertaken. If so, it would most probably be preceded or immediately followed by a Peiping announcement (perhaps directed to the United Nations) that in order to protect border installations vital to Manchurian economy, the Chinese Communist forces had taken over these installations pending stabilization of the area. Such a move would be a Communist face-saver and would preserve a power source very necessary to the Manchurian economy."

3. On 6 November 1950, National Intelligence Estimate No. 2 was issued on the subject "Chinese Communist Intervention in Korea". This estimate stated: "Present Chinese Communist troop strength in North Korea is estimated at 30,000 to 40,000.", and: "Present Chinese Communist troop strength in Manchuria is estimated at 700,000. Of this number there are at least 200,000 regular field forces. These troop strengths, added to the forces already in Korea, are believed to make the Chinese Communists capable of: (a) halting further United Nations advance northward, through piecemeal commitment of troops; or, (b) forcing UN withdrawal to defensive positions farther south by a powerful assault."

The estimate continued: "The objective of the Chinese Communist intervention appears to be to halt the advance of United Nations forces in Korea and to keep a Chinese regime in being on Korean soil."

It further stated: "The Chinese Communists thus far retain full freedom of action with respect to Korea. They are free to adjust their action in accordance with the development of the situation. If the Chinese Communists were to succeed in destroying the effective strength of UN forces in northern Korea, they would pursue their advantage as far as possible. If the military situation is stabilized, they may well consider that, with advantageous terrain and the onset of winter, their forces now in Korea are sufficient to accomplish their immediate purposes."

The next to last paragraph of the conclusions of this estimate stated: "The Chinese Communists, in intervening in Korea, have accepted a grave risk of retaliation and general war. They would probably ignore an ultimatum requiring their withdrawal. If Chinese territory were to be attacked they would probably enter Korea in full force."

And the concluding paragraph of the estimate on 6 November stated: "The fact that both the Chinese Communists and the USSR have accepted an increased risk of a general war indicates either that the Kremlin is ready to face a showdown with the West at an early date or that circumstances have forced them to accept that risk."

Further, in the discussion portion of this estimate published on 6 November 1950, it was stated: "The Chinese Communists could probably make available as many as 300,000 troops within 30 to 60 days for sustained ground operations in Korea and could provide limited air support and some armor."

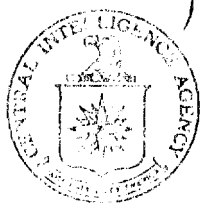
4. On 24 November 1950, National Intelligence Estimate 2/1, a review of the subject "Chinese Communist Intervention in Korea" in the light of new developments and new information was issued. In its conclusions this estimate stated: "The Chinese Communists will simultaneously:

- a. maintain Chinese-North Korean holding operations in North Korea;
- b. maintain or increase their military strength in Manchuria;
- c. seek to obtain UN withdrawal from Korea by intimidation and diplomatic means.

"In case of failure to obtain UN withdrawal by these means there will be increasing Chinese intervention in Korea. At a minimum the Chinese will conduct, on an increasing scale, unacknowledged operations designed to immobilize UN forces in Korea, to subject them to prolonged attrition, and to maintain the semblance of a North Korean state in being. Available evidence is not conclusive as to whether or not the Chinese Communists are as yet committed to a full-scale offensive effort. Eventually they may undertake operations designed to bring about the withdrawal of UN forces from Korea. It is estimated that they do not have the military capability of driving the UN forces from the peninsula, but they do have the capability of forcing them to withdraw to defensive positions for prolonged and inconclusive operations, which, the Communists might calculate, would lead to eventual UN withdrawal from Korea."

It should be noted that the above mentioned estimate (NIE 2/1) was published on 24 November 1950, just two days before the United Nations offensive into North Korea and the resultant full-scale Chinese Communist intervention.

WALTER B. SMITH
Director



CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

SECRET

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

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The Honorable Robert A. Lovett
Deputy Secretary of Defense
Department of Defense
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Lovett:

Please refer to your letters of May 8 and 10, 1951, forwarding letters from Senator Russell, Chairman of the Armed Services Committee, and Senator Saltonstall. Senator Saltonstall's letter requests that we make available to the Committee on Armed Services "the Central Intelligence Agency reports concerning Korea from June 1, 1950 to April 1, 1951...together with a list of officers in the Defense Department, the Department of State, the Departments of the Army, Navy and Air Force, to whom these reports were delivered."

As you are aware, many of these voluminous reports come to us from extremely sensitive sources. Other reports come to us from foreign intelligence services. Further, these reports vary in quality from worthless to significant, and it would require trained intelligence analysts to interpret them. Most important of all, however, is the necessity to protect our sources. It was with this thought in mind that the Congress (in Section 102 (d)(3) of the National Security Act of 1947) placed on the Director of Central Intelligence the responsibility for protecting intelligence sources and methods. However, these raw intelligence reports are passed to the pertinent intelligence agencies of the Federal Government upon receipt and the Department of Defense has all of them. They should not be released as to do so would be to reveal their sources.

These raw reports have been evaluated and collated by the Central Intelligence Agency and the other appropriate intelligence agencies of the Government. The final interpretation of all this material, and the finished product of our whole intelligence system, is made by the Central Intelligence Agency, in collaboration with the heads of the various intelligence services, into National Intelligence Estimates. These National Intelligence Estimates are distributed to the members of the National Security Council and the members of the Intelligence Advisory Committee, which is composed of the heads of the different intelligence services. Thus, these National Estimates as well as all of the basic intelligence reports having to do with the Korean situation were distributed to

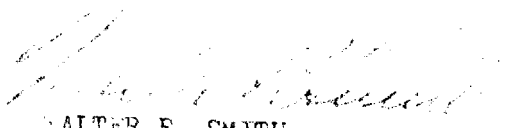
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the Department of Defense and its major subsidiary intelligence offices. I am also informed that those estimates dealing with the Far Eastern situation were distributed by the Department of the Army to the Far Eastern Command. In addition, our representatives with the Far Eastern Command passed to that headquarters immediately upon receipt such reports as they themselves obtained.

I must call your attention to the National Security Council Intelligence Directive Number 12 (dated January 6, 1950) which states in paragraph 3: "In cases where the disclosure of classified information is sought from the Director of Central Intelligence, and he has doubt as to whether he should comply, the question will be referred to the National Security Council."

In the present situation it is my firm belief that in view of the vital importance of protecting our sources, and the incalculable benefit to unfriendly powers which results from any revelation of the extent and accuracy of our information at any given time, none of the above material should be released to any other agency of government except those few now authorized to receive it. I would so recommend to the National Security Council.

Sincerely,


WALTER B. SMITH
Director



~~TOP SECRET~~
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
WASHINGTON, HEADQUARTERS SERVICES
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301

December 16, 1981

MEMORANDUM FOR THE CHIEF, CLASSIFICATION REVIEW DIVISION, CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

SUBJECT: Request for Declassification Review

During the systematic review of all classified Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) documents over 20 years old, the Declassification and Historical Research Branch, Records Management Division, Directorate for Correspondence and Directives, Washington Headquarters Services, turned up the attached document(s).

The documents were either originated by your agency, contain information for which your agency is the classification authority, or are otherwise of interest to you.

It is therefore requested that your agency review the documents and recommend declassification, continued classification at the present or lesser level of classification, and/or review by other agencies. If your agency is recommending continued classification, in accordance with Paragraph 3-401, Executive Order 12065, it is requested that an authority for continued classification be specified, along with a date for the next review.

The time permitted by Executive Order 12065 to reach the point where all OSD documents over 20 years old have been reviewed, and the large volume of over 20 year old OSD documents, make it necessary to request your response within 60 days. In your response, you may wish to provide guidance with regard to what categories of information you do and do not wish to have referred to you in the future.

Your assistance in effecting this review will be most appreciated. Please return the documents to Mr. Brian V. Kinney, Chief, Declassification and Historical Research Branch, Records Management Division, Washington Headquarters Services, Room 1D517, Pentagon, Washington, D.C. 20301, upon completion of your review.

Without attachments, this memorandum is UNCLASSIFIED.

E. E. Lowry, Jr.
E. E. Lowry, Jr.
OSD Records Administrator

Attachments (3)

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OSD-DB-TS-120-81

LIST OF ATTACHMENTS

1. Memo, 4 May 51, Subj: Summary of Intelligence Estimates on Intervention by Chinese Communists in the Korean War (12 October - 24 November, 1950) (TS)
2. Memo, 6 May 51, Subj: Intelligence and Information Available to FECOM Concerning Chinese Communist Intervention/w 2 Attachments--Tab "A", Summarized Excerpts from FECOM Reports; Tab "B", Excerpts from CIA Weekly Summaries (TS)
3. Letter, May 21, 51, Re: Central Intelligence Agency Reports (TS)